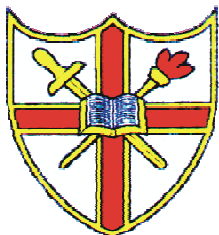


# Sounding the Trumpet

July - September 2011



F.E.M.



# God's Signet Ring

**L**et us look at the book of Haggai for a moment before we get into his message and as we do we find that it is the second shortest book with only thirty verses over two chapters. In addition we find that Haggai's recorded public ministry was also the shortest of all the prophets, for it only lasted three months (from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 9<sup>th</sup> month of the reign of Darius the Persian, i.e. 522BC). Yet within this shortest of books and time scale there is a picture of both the hardship of the returning exiles from the Babylonian exile and also the great potential of following and obeying God. We also see the glory of God revealed when the Temple is rebuilt and He fills it with His presence. Then notice that God promises to make Zerubabel 'like a signet ring'.

## **What is a signet ring?**

Today the real meaning of the signet ring has largely disappeared until it has become just another piece of jewellery, but it has much more significance than this, for it was a very important item and was only worn by those in authority. The signet ring of my youth usually had the initials of the wearer engraved on it; however, before then the signet ring had the seal of authority on it. It was used by the wearer to signify their authority to act and seal documents.

If you look closely at the hands of Prince Charles you will see that he has a signet ring on one finger (I think it is the little finger of his left hand), and this was given to him by the Queen when she started handing him some of her authority. On occasions Prince Charles signs documents on behalf of his mother and makes an impression of the ring in wax after his name to show that he has acted with the authority of the Queen. It is just as if the Queen herself had signed the document herself. No-one can undo or change the document once the seal has been put on it. It is permanent. I do not have a signet ring, but when I witness a marriage and my signature has been put on the entry in the marriage books, it is very difficult to alter anything, because I act on behalf of the Registrar General and only he can authorise any alteration.

## **So who is this Zerubabel?**

Zerubabel was the son of Shealtiel, Governor of Judah. He was a friend of Joshua the son of Jehozadak, the high priest. He was a man of importance in the community and also had close contacts with the religious leaders. His whose name means "offspring of Babylon" was a descendant of David. He returned from the Babylonian exile to become the Governor of Judah under King Darius 1. He was the grandson of Jehoiachin the exiled king of Judah.

Zerubabel, alongside others, was responsible for the completion of the rebuilding of the temple, which took five years. It is strange to note that there is no reference to Zerubabel at the dedication of the Temple, but tradition has it that he may have been removed by the Persians because of the threat of rebellion in his region. Zerubabel is also mentioned in Matthew and Luke in the genealogies of Jesus.

So He was an important man but it was not for this reason that God said He was going to make him like a signet ring. It was instead it was because of his obedience and commitment to God and His work.

## **He knew God's Presence**

In 1:13 and 2:4 God said 'I am with you' and in 2:5 God said 'My Spirit is with you, do not fear'. It was important to Zerubabel that he knew the presence of God was with him if he was to make anything of himself and do anything of value. He associated with God's people, with Joshua. It is not recorded in scripture, but I am sure that he practiced his faith

and attended the temple, such as it was, faithfully, I believe that he listened to the prophets. He lived a holy life before God and he followed the ritual of cleansing. We too can know God's presence with us, if we remain pure in our hearts and if we continue to associate with God's people and listen to His word. We represent the King of Kings as His signet ring and carry His authority.

### **Zerubabel also knew God's authority**

The people were happy to build nice houses for themselves and let the temple go to ruin. They wanted to live in luxury and made sure that their houses had all the mod cons of the day.

Haggai went to Zerubabel in chapter 1 and said 'the Lord says, "Is it time for you yourselves to dwell in panelled houses, and this temple lie in ruins?" Then God said, "Consider your ways." Then later in 1:8, "Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified." Haggai reminded Zerubabel of God's authority and power over everything. God had authority and power over the elements, He caused a draught, He had authority and power over the land and the plants, He caused the crops to fail (:9-11). Then in chapter 2:6-8 God says He will shake heaven and earth, the sea and dry land, and He will shake the nations so much that they will turn to Him and fill His temple with glory, then he says that the silver is His and the gold is His.

Also God is not blind, you would be amazed what God can see. He does not need to go to SpecSavers, for He sees everything clearly. Some Christians think that God has days or areas where He does not see so well, and that they can get away with doing things that please themselves rather than God. Just like the people in this study that thought that God would not notice their fine houses or that the temple was in ruins, but He did. We need to be vigilant and make sure that our lives and our possessions are under His control and that we do not neglect His house, His people or those He wants to bring to Himself. To be God's signet ring we must know God's authority and power and respect it.

### **Zerubabel knew God's will and did it**

In 1:8 God said through Haggai, "Go up to the mountains and bring wood and build the temple, that I may take pleasure in it and be glorified." Then in :14, "So the Lord stirred up the spirit of Zerubabel and the spirit of Joshua and the spirit of all the remnant of the people, and they came and worked on the House of the Lord of Hosts, their God."

When the people were prepared to seek God's will and do it, God said, "I will shake all nations and they shall come to the Desire of All Nations, and I will fill this temple with My glory" (2:7). He also said in :9, "The glory of this latter temple will be greater than the former, and in this place I will give peace." When God's people look to Him and seek His will for their lives, He will reveal His will. When we do His will God blesses us more than we can ever imagine.

The latter temple was greater in God's eyes than the former, and He promised to bless it and to fill it with both people and with His Glory. If we are faithful in seeking His will and then following it, He has promised that He will be faithful in blessing our churches and filling them with His glory. Let us, like Zerubabel, know God's presence, know God's authority and power, and know God's will and do it. If we do this we will become God's signet rings and will be used by Him to put His seal on the people we come into contact with. When He uses us for His glory no-one will be able to defeat us or undo what God has done through us for His Glory.

**Michael Hewison**

# Be not many Masters

**“My brethren, be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation”**

(James 3:1).

**W**hat a statement! Here James gives a warning that there should not be too many teachers or ‘masters.’ Their judgment is much greater, and much stricter. The reason for this is primarily the value that God places on His Word - the Living Word, the Sword of the Spirit, how we handle it, how we proclaim it, how we preach and teach it.

Such is the responsibility and so important is the calling, to rightly divide the Word of Truth. Yes, a huge responsibility, but also what a privilege! If our preaching is Christ-centered, Biblical and with conviction, I am sure the Lord would bless that ministry.

“Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth” (2 Timothy 2:15)

When the preacher stands before the Lord, He will be strict. Whilst there is still time let us pray that we will be masters of the Word. Pray for more and more opportunities to preach and teach. Let us be prayerful that we always have the fear of the Lord rather than the fear of man. Let us handle the Word correctly with reverence, for it is a privilege to do so.

Finally, we should not be put off preaching by this verse if we received the calling. “And He gave some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers” (Ephesians 4:11)

Yes, our judgment will be stricter, but surely the reward for the faithful man who rightly divides God’s Word will be greater.

**Richard Hardy**

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## Jonah

A commentary series by David Moody

**2v3.** *“For thou hadst cast me into the deep, in the midst of the seas; and the floods compassed me about: all thy billows and thy waves passed over me.”* It seem that there is no doubt that Jonah had a good knowledge of the Old Testament scriptures that were available to him, especially the Psalms. [ i.e. Psalms 42:7. *“Deep calleth unto deep at the noise of thy waterspouts: all thy waves and thy billows are gone over me.”*] He realised that it was not the sailors that had caused him to where he was, but the Lord.

**2v4.** *“Then I said, I am cast out of thy sight; yet I will look again toward thy holy temple.”* The Jews in the Old Testament when they prayed always looked towards the temple in Jerusalem. Daniel *“went into his house; and his windows being open in his chamber toward Jerusalem, he kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.”* [Dan. 6:10] Jonah felt that God could not see him but in his great need and difficulty he would look again to the only one who could deliver him.

The One who has sent him to proclaim a message. The One who had brought him to the end of himself. God did see him because God sees each one of us wherever

we are and whatever we are doing. *"And she called the name of the LORD that spake unto her, Thou God seest me: for she said, Have I also here looked after him that seeth me?"* [Gen. 16:13].

**2v5.** *"The waters compassed me about, even to the soul: the depth closed me round about, the weeds were wrapped about my head. He is seeing himself spiritually as he was physically and it wasn't a pleasant thing to see and to know.*

**2v6.** *"I went down to the bottoms of the mountains; the earth with her bars was about me for ever: yet hast thou brought up my life from corruption, O LORD my God."* We see here that Jonah had been going down to the bottom of the deepest sea even *"to the bottom of the mountains"* before God brought the fish to swallow Jonah. This is why he now says *"Yet Thou has brought up my life from corruption, O Lord my God."* Even so being in that squalid, stinking, stomach was not a pleasant place to be, but he was there by the grace of God. Wherever we are, even after we have disobeyed God, we will know the grace of God in restoration when we come to the end of ourselves.

**2v7.** *"When my soul fainted within me I remembered the LORD: and my prayer came in unto thee, into thine holy temple."* When Jonah was really in trouble and he had come to the end of his own strength, he had stopped striving, it was then his memory returned *"I remembered the LORD"* He surrendered himself unconditionally to the will of God, after he saw the folly of his reasoning that he knew better the Almighty God. God often uses chastisement to bring his people back to Himself. Jonah's prayer went from the his tomb [for he was as good as dead] to God's Temple. Paul and Silas prayed and praised in prison and it went right into God's presence. [Acts 16:25].

**2v8.** *"They that observe lying vanities forsake their own mercy."* Jonah had got himself into trouble because {a} he had neglected prayer and {b} forgot God [v.7] and {c} believed lies as we see in this verse and {d} forsaken his own *"faithfulness."* [NAS] He had to learn the hard way that you cannot escape God's way and will, and yet he knew where he could go in his great need and ask for forgiveness. *"For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee."* [Psalms 86:5].

**2v9.** *"But I will sacrifice unto thee with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay that I have vowed. **Salvation is of the LORD**"* Jonah knew God had heard his cry and would answer in His own good time. Now he thanks God for all that he has learned and the way God has delivered him. *"By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name."* [Heb. 13:15]. He acknowledges that his prophetic vow had to be paid and he had to obey the command of God. He also knew he would only get back on track through the saving work of the Almighty God. It finally dawned on Jonah that *"Salvation is of the Lord."*

**2v10.** *"And the LORD spake unto the fish, and it vomited out Jonah upon the dry land."* God had done his chastising of Jonah and had brought about the desired result. The fish had completed the work that God had called it to do, so God commands the fish to vomit up Jonah and it does. Here we see the obedience of the creature because it heard and obeyed the voice of its creator. Wherever Jonah landed on dry land it must have been a few hundred miles from Nineveh so he still had a long walk to get there. REMEMBER. **God even uses our down times to build us up.**

# What is your excuse?

“And when one of them that sat at meat with him heard these things, he said unto him, blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God. Then said he (Jesus) unto him, a certain man made a great supper, and bade many: And sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and showed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper” (Luke 14: 15 -24).

Society in general is full of people who make excuses at the drop of a hat!

- (a) Especially if it is something they don't want to do.
- (b) Somewhere they would like to avoid going.
- (c) Some advice or evidence they would rather not give or receive.

It is very easy to use an excuse as a get out clause when it comes to abdicating our responsibly or readily admitting our mistakes. When it comes to matters which God requires of you and me we seem to have more excuses than usual, in fact we become amazed how they roll off the tongue and they go from the sublime to the absolute ridiculous.

## **To the non-Christian**

Many find excuses by the bucket full giving reasons why they should or could not be obedient to God's call to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ his Son.

## **To the believer**

It is astonishing at the number of the Lord's people who can find a million excuses why they should not or will not do what the Lord is calling or asking them to do.

Let us look at our bible reading and see how feeble the excuses are. For the excuses heard today have not altered since biblical days.

(1) I am wanting..... Luke 14:18.

(a) It is more important that I deal with everyday things first.

(b) I need to put my house in order. Anyway I will have plenty of time later to sort God's things out, at the moment I've got better things to do!

(2) I am working.....Luke 14:19.

(a) I have to work longer because the government have cut my benefits.

(b) I have to take more time finding out where to invest my assets to make them safe for the future. In fact I am happier at work and want to carry on as long as I can.

(3) I am now wed.....Luke 14:20.

(a) I have more responsibilities now, and life is so demanding.

(b) Life is more complicated now than it ever was.

(c) My dear wife is so good at finding me jobs to work at and do.

In fact my wife has found more DIY work for me than could be found at the Employment Exchange.

I had no spare time before I got married to my wife, so I have certainly less time now. What is your excuse, will it count or be acceptable to the Lord? "And they all with one consent began to make excuse." Don't delay like those mentioned here for a moment longer, make your choice and decision to accept Jesus as Saviour "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16).

**Terry Martin**

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## Evangelical

I am pleased to be a Christian evangelical believer. Evangelical Christians have known and experienced God's gracious blessing since the time the progressive revelation of Bible truth was finalized in Christ and the apostles. It is complete and is not to be added to or taken from. It is impossible to improve the perfection of God's Holy Word.

Evangelical Christians were often mercilessly tortured and exterminated! This dark fact of history was pictured in their recorded lives and so often in their martyrdoms. Blood soaked Bibles spoke eloquently, often excruciating pain was staked with exquisite praise and worship.

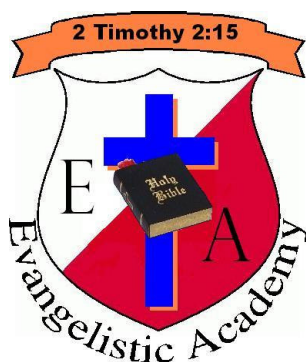
Evangelical Christians continue evangelising. Evangelical believers, evangelical authors and writers and evangelical preachers and pastors, have done more to declare the gospel in the world than any other branch of the Christian church.

Evangelical Christians can feel more empowered. We have become adept at caging and controlling all the criticisms that incessantly come our way. Evangelical faith is scary to people who prefer pitch darkness to grope in rather than pure light to walk in. Evangelical salt maintains a level of good taste and purity. Yet many people refuse gospel salt preferring tainted titbits from self proclaimed experts in the art of living in the present day.

Evangelical believers are much less timid or cowed by the unproven condescending pronouncements from a small number of well known high flyers in our government and University Halls of Academia. Some seek to become noteworthy, by damaging Biblical truth, thus undermining faith.

Evangelical continuity. The Gospel of the evangelical preacher and teacher came from heaven. It is a heavenly life giving Gospel. There is no way on earth it will be destroyed by mincing words emanating from earthly gutters "For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God. (Paul 1 Corinthians 1:17-18).

**Frank Rowley**



## Distance Learning Courses

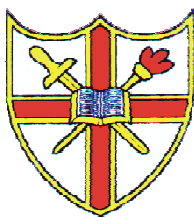
**Bible Certificate: £50.00**

**Diploma in Theology: £100.00**

**Licentiate in Theology: £200.00**

Contact us for an application form.





# Update

July - September 2011

## Fellowship of Evangelistic Ministries

**F**ully **E**ffective **M**embership

### Word of encouragement

"The strong hands of God twisted the crown of thorns into a crown of glory; and in such hands we are safe". David Moody.

### Casting the net and sowing the seed

FEM is involved in both these practical activities. We are a living, witnessing group of believers and friends seeking to be obedient to the Lord Jesus Christ.

"And Jesus, walking by the sea of Galilee, saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he said unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him."

Today we have use of a larger net than the nets Peter and Andrew hung up to follow the Man of Nazareth. We have an electronic world wide net and the mesh is correct in size and effective in use.

Enquiries have come through the net from sunny Spain and the delightful area of Devon. FEM premier site, along with members personal web sites, are operational at all times.

We are seeking to cast the net on the right side of the boat as it were and pray the Lord will send 153 fish into it! Do it again, Lord, we pray!

### Sowing seed

Our seed is pure and it is viable seed. It is not contaminated seed, biblical seed, when sown wisely, brings new life and makes hearts that are dead and dry in the desert of life spring up like roses in the wilderness. Keep sowing the seed of life in your ministry. Seed is meant to be sown not kept nice and neat in the leather Bible packet. Let FEM members keep scattering seed from our pulpits and in our local communities, perhaps someone will grow a mustard tree!

Unexpected germination, we should expect the unexpected in our ministry. Simple illustration: Bird seed in my garden dropped by the visiting birds from the feeder has resulted in wheat and barley springing up in the borders; I love to see things like that happen. This led me to plant some sunflower seeds from the bird feeder and they



too have come through and are now six foot high. Keep sowing the seed of salvation and may new life spring up in our fellowships and churches. We must remember to take the seed from the Bible and sow and scatter it before anything will happen.

### FEM Facebook

FEM is operating on Facebook. Our designated page is exclusive to members only and can be accessed via [www.femonline.co.uk](http://www.femonline.co.uk)

### FEM e-Pub and Kindle Library

We have over 700 free Christian books available. These books can be read on electronic readers such as Sony and Kindle. Save yourself a fortune visit [www.LWBC.co.uk](http://www.LWBC.co.uk) and download those of your choice free of charge.

On my recent visit to hospital (3 hour duration) the consultant eye surgeon noticed my Kindle reader and asked to see it with the cover and built in light. He was very interested. At the time I was reading through a Bible reading programme in Leviticus and the procedure for leprosy was on the page. He looked at it, then looked at me, then back to my Kindle

He was more than intrigued. The Lucindis Injection Programme was again helpful to my eyesight. 5 injections in the eye now – I am one of the old hands for LIP he said. Wish I could enjoy the process.

### Celebration of Yvonne Pennington's Life

Richard Cook conducted the funeral service at Preston for Yvonne who had been a faithful member and prayerful supporter of FEM for many years. Richard conveyed the love and deep sympathy of FEM Executive and members to Yvonne's family and friends. Our sad loss is Heaven's glad gain.

### FEM Audio Ministries

Weekly audio sermons are uploaded to FEM website. These ministry sermons are preached and recorded in the Living Word Bible Church and the Hunslet Church of the Nazarene (FEM's registered office)

### FEM AGM

Ian has produced a CD of the celebration service conducted at Cranfield Baptist Church near Milton Keynes. Available on request.

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## Becoming a Tree of Life

**T**here are two trees presented to us in the Garden of Eden, the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil (Genesis 3:1-4), but the Tree of Life was the most precious tree (Genesis 3:22-24). It seems that after man's partaking of the fruit of the first tree, the Tree of Life was transported to Heaven, **"And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of**

**fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations”** (Revelation 22:1-2). According to our text all believers can be like the Tree of Life, for the message we bring to the world are the leaves that can heal the nations.

Unless we reach out to the lost they will perish and suffer everlasting torment in Hell. **“For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?”** (Romans 10:13-14). Christians of all eras are commissioned to go **“and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever”** He has commanded us (Matthew 28:19-20).

This is the way in which we can be Trees of Life to a nation that has corrupted itself and turned from God and His word. As Solomon says, this is one the wisest thing we can do with our lives, for surely reaching out to the lost and winning them to Christ is one of the best fruits we are able to produce. The Tree of Life is precious to the Lord; therefore those who teach the truth are precious in His sight too.

*“The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life;  
and he that winneth souls is wise”*  
(Proverbs 11:30).

**Gary Hall**

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If you have information, articles, or prayer request that you would like to be included in a future edition of the UPDATE, Please contact:

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<p><b>Please note:</b> Copies of members’ details are kept on our databases, which Includes Box.net, a secure Internet Server. If you do not want your details kept in this way please contact the Administrator by letter.</p>
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